



Review

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Riesman anecdotally implies in his Introduction.

It is no easier for an academic woman to evaluate this book objectively than it would be for a Negro sociologist to review a book about Negro academics written by a Negro. (Indeed its assignment to an academic woman rather than, say, to a student of higher education, or even a student of women, seems like the kind of phenomenon that should find a place in this book.) Bernard's eclecticism in selection and presentation of data is matched by a conceptual eclecticism, in which academic women are analyzed sometimes in terms of "intrinsically" feminine personality characteristics, sometimes in terms of normal sex-role socialization, sometimes in terms of status or role anomalies. Sometimes they are analogized to Negroes as a similar social category; sometimes they are talked about as a special occupation—in which some have a "vocation" for teaching, or occupy a fringe-benefit status, and so on. The absence of a central analytic theme permits the author to touch upon a wide variety of issues connected with her subject matter: it is a smorgasbord, and a rich and engaging one, to which it is difficult to do justice in a brief review.

With all that is good, careful, and indeed important for those interested in the subject matter, there is much that is disturbing to me as a sociologist, woman, and academic. In general Bernard's logic implies that this is the way things are, and many women like it or have adjusted to it, and hence it is not bad. This explains neither how things got that way nor—except tangentially—the psychic and social costs of maintaining the status quo. (Does Dr. Bernard *really* believe in a secular "vocation for celibacy," for example?)

In leaning over backward to understand her non-elite sisters on their own terms, Jessie Bernard has made a significant contribution: only further research on academic women of *all* types, it seems to me, can answer some of the questions that this book raises and begs.

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Psychiatric Ideologies and Institutions. By
ANSELM STRAUSS, LEONARD SCHATZMAN,

RUE BUCHER, DANUTA EHRLICH, and MELVIN SABSHIN. New York: Free Press, 1964. Pp. xi+418. \$8.50.

This is far too big a book to describe in the space of a short review—big because it contains a large number of words in its tightly printed four hundred pages and big because it covers a wide range of material.

In substance, the book deals with two different psychiatric settings in the Chicago area, the first a large state hospital housing about four thousand patients and the second a small, private teaching hospital with a strongly psychotherapeutic orientation and a wide reputation for excellence. The main focus of the book, as the title indicates, is the various professional ideologies which members of the hospital staff bring to the job of managing patients and getting along with one another. This problem is probed in three different approaches to the topic—a thoughtful questionnaire administered to 485 professionals in the mental health field; a fascinating sketch of ward routines in the state hospital; and a longer, more comprehensive report of professional and patient activities in the smaller of the two institutions. Given the length of the manuscript and the richness of its contents, it would be foolhardy to venture a summary of the book, but I would like to suggest in a brief way what kind of book it is.

The main contribution of this work, it seems to me, lies in its approach to the study of institutions. This is a book on social organization written by investigators who come primarily from a background in social psychology, and as such it offers a perspective on the concept of structure which is both imaginative and refreshing. The authors themselves are committed to the notion that human life is in a continual process of transformation and change, and their view of social structure reflects much the same qualities. The mental hospital is seen here as a scene of restless activity, an arena in which people are constantly negotiating with one another to establish a momentary division of labor which will sooner or later be replaced by another. What most sociologists would call the "structure" of the hospital, then, is scarcely more than a temporary arrangement built on provisional bargains and transient agreements. Freeze the moving scenery at any given moment in time, as one does with a photo-

graph, and we have an illusion of stability and order; but observe the moving scenery over a period of time, and we discover that today's pattern of stability soon gives way to tomorrow's, as the members of the group go through the exhausting business of forming and reforming the conditions of their work world. Now this does not necessarily mean that the mental hospital is less structured than other kinds of establishment. It means that one must look for evidence of structure in the ebbs and tides of the negotiation process itself and not assume that the coherence of the organization is somehow reflected in a stable set of administrative rules, institutional norms, or orders reaching down from the front office. In my own opinion, this is far and away the most compelling description of life in the mental hospital, and I say this having a high regard for several other works available in the literature.

An accomplishment of this sort has its risks. To begin with, the book will probably be described by some readers as a little wordy, and indeed it is; but the reasons for this are easy to see. The authors were required to develop a new imagery to give life to their new perspective, and this meant that they had to abandon much of the conventional vocabulary which lends such economy (and such flatness) to sociological prose. In the process of choosing a style to fit their approach, they employed a large number of words, and this means that the reader must make a considerable investment of time to see the book through to its conclusion. I mention this point primarily because many a reader will be tempted to skim the surface of the book for its findings, rather than taking the time to read it thoroughly; and while there is more than enough substance here to reward the browser for his efforts, he is very apt to miss a valuable experience. Like many well-written pieces of work, the sociological richness of this book is as much a product of its language as of its logic.

The book may also be criticized for its lack of a central organizing theme, but this apparent weakness, too, is in many ways a reflection of its principal strength. The authors clearly began their study by imposing on themselves a degree of conceptual open-mindedness which is rare in sociological research. They carefully avoided the temptation of evaluating the psychiatric setting by standards derived from psy-

chiatry itself or of drawing a convenient set of hypotheses from among the various studies of formal organization, and, therefore, they avoided the error, so common in projects of this sort, of mistaking the structure of their argument for the structure of the institution they were exploring. But this stratagem also meant that they had no settled base line from which to mount their expedition into the hospital world. Readers of the book are, in a sense, invited to join the authors as they circle their subject, prowl around the edges of the institution, now and then reaching into the scene to record a particular event or study a particular process. The result of all this is a series of skilfully drawn scenes, rather than a narrative with a clear story line—but that, of course, is the character of the social situation they are describing, for one of the major findings of their research was that the various regions of the hospital did not fit together into a consistent map at all. It is in this sense that the reader must pay attention to the manner in which the story is told, for the texture of the hospital setting is reflected in the texture of the prose used to describe it and cannot be wholly deduced from the formal argument which threads its way through the manuscript.

In a word, the book offers us considerably more than a glimpse of the mental hospital, although it would deserve a wide readership on that score alone. The authors speak fondly of the "model" they have developed in the course of their work, but for once I think they have chosen the wrong word. Their approach to the hospital is more than a model: it is at once a style of thinking, a strategy of work, a new sociological genre from which we may all learn a great deal.

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Death and Identity. Edited by ROBERT FULTON. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1965. Pp. xi+415. \$6.95.

This book should give us cause for some thought, much less for any excellence as such than for what it reflects about sociologists' sense of problem.

Robert Fulton, a sociologist, has put together a collection of readings, with one or two exceptions already published elsewhere, deal-